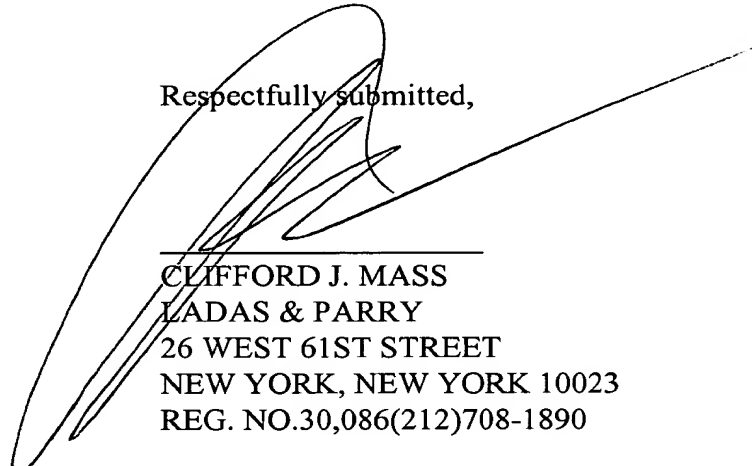


REMARKS

Applicants urge that claims 1-13, and 15-20, as amended in the response filed on September 22, 2003, are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that issues can be resolved through a telephone interview, the Examiner is urged to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below. If the Examiner considers raising objections in a further Office Action, it is requested that such an action not be made final in view of the confusion regarding the claims as identified in the present Office Action.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment A
CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) Pigments of silica-iron oxide comprising a ~~characterized in that the~~ silica component (SiO_2) is obtained from microsilica, having a ratio of silica that ranges between 70 and 98% by weight, and a ~~while the~~ ratio of iron oxide that ranges between 2 and 30% by weight.

2. (currently amended) A process for obtaining pigments of claim 1, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ comprising the following steps:

- C1
- a) blending majority and minority raw materials[,] containing microsilica and iron oxide, respectively, to form a blend of raw materials,
 - b) agglomerating ~~of the resulting~~ blend of raw materials ~~from the previous stage,~~
 - c) calcinating in an oven the agglomerated blend ~~obtained in the previous stage~~ with a thermal cycle at temperatures ~~comprised~~ between 800 and 1300°C, with residence times ranging between ✓ 1 and 24 h, to obtain a pigment,
 - d) blending the pigment to obtain a blend of pigment having ✓ particles with a particle size ~~obtained in the previous calcination step,~~
 - e) reducing the particle size of the obtained blend of pigment, and
 - f) final blending with control of the chromaticity coordinates of the ~~obtained pigment[,]~~
 - g) ~~Dosing and packaging.~~

3. (currently amended) A process according to claim 2, in which stages a) and/or b) are ~~may be~~ carried out in dry conditions.

4. (currently amended) A process according to claim 2, in which stages a) and/or b) are ~~may be~~ carried out in wet conditions.

5. (previously presented) A process according to claim 3, in which the blend from stage a) is carried out by milling.

6. (currently amended) A process according to claim 4, in which the mixture from stage a) is carried out by dispersion, ~~preferably in water~~.

7. (previously presented) A process according to claim 5, in which the agglomeration of stage b) consists of a granulation.

8. (currently amended) A process according to claim 6, in which the agglomeration of stage b) consists of drying by 5 atomization.

9. (previously presented) A process according to claim 2, in which, before stage c) there is a prior pre-calcination step.

10. (currently amended) A process according to claim 2, in which, after stage c), there is a cooling step, prior to blending 10 of the resulting pigment.

11. (currently amended) A process according to claim 2, in which step e) ~~preferably~~ consists of grinding or milling.

12. (previously presented) Pigments obtained according to the process of claim 2.

13. (currently amended) A process for the manufacture of inorganic pigments and/or colorants, comprising adding Use of microsilica as a source of SiO₂ in the manufacture of to said inorganic pigments and/or colorants during manufacture thereof.

15. (currently amended) A process Use according to claim 13, characterized in 20 that wherein the source of silica is obtained from condensation of gases evolved during the manufacture of silicon metal and/or alloys thereof.

16. (currently amended) A process for the manufacture of compositions of enamels, glasses, ceramics, cements, plastics, laminates, graphic inks or rubber, comprising adding ~~Use of~~ the pigments of claim 1, alone or in blends with other materials, as ~~integrants~~ ingredients to in the said compositions of enamels, glasses, ceramics, cements, plastics, laminates, graphic inks ~~and or~~ or rubber.

17. (currently amended) A process for decorating the surface of enamels, glasses, ceramics, cements, plastics, laminates, graphic inks or rubber, comprising using ~~Use of~~ the pigments of claim 1, alone or in blends with other materials, in the surface decoration of enamels, glasses, ceramics, cements, plastics, laminates, graphic inks ~~and or~~ or rubber.

C1
Cont
18. (currently amended) A ceramic product ~~characterized in that it includes~~ including in its composition the pigments of claim 1.

19. (currently amended) A ceramic product in accordance with claim 18, ~~characterized in that it~~ wherein the product consists of a porcelain stoneware.

20. (currently amended) A porcelain stoneware in accordance with claim 19, ~~characterized in that it shows~~ comprising chromatic coordinates (Hunter-LAB) in the following ranges: $L = 36-46$, $a = 10-18$ and $b = 7-11$, for a percentage pigment of 2% that gives a colour of red-orange tone.
